to high cost of imported scrap and increase in power rates ;

(b) the number if such steel plants which have been closed down during the last one year; and

(c) what steps Government are taking to help the secondary steel sector to survive ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) to (c) The performance of mini steel plants (electric arc furnace units) has been affected due to various factors such as deman'd recession, shortage of power and increase in input costs including rise in international scrap prices. It is reported that 14 such units closed during the calendar year 1992 and another 15 units have closed during the calendar year 1993 (upto September, 1993). The Industry has represented for various reliefs and the proposals made are under the consideration of Goverment.

Private Sector Participation in Steel Industry

196. SHRI SURESH KALMADI:

SHRI GOVINDRAO RAMRAO ADIK:

Will the Minister of STEEL be please'd to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that greater private sector participation is being envisaged by Government in the steel industry ;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor ; and

(c) the details and the extent of private sector participation envisaged ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) to (c) Due to resource constraints, it is not proposed to set up any new steel plant in the public sector during the VIII five year plan period. In order to bridge the projected gap in demand and availability, it is expected that additional steel production capacities will come up in the private sector. The iron and steel industry his been de-regulated and also exempted from the requirements of compulsory licencing. It is expected that finished steel production in the secondary steel sector will increase from about 6.70 million tonnes in 1992-93 to about 11 million tonnes in 1996-97.

Setting up Steel Plant in Public Sector

197. MISS SAROI KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have taken a final decision to the effect that henceforth Steel Plants would not be set up in the public sector ; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b) In view of the limited availability of resources, there is no proposal to set up new steel plants is the public sector during the Eighth Plan Period. The resources available to the steel sector in the Eighth Plan are to be utilised for the modernisation and expansion of the existing steel plants in the public sector.

Sail Improvement in Production

198. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has claimed an all round improvement in production during 1992-93 ;

(b) whether it is also a fact that figures of production of saleable steel brought out by SAIL show that production in 1992-93 has actually come down in comparison to the period in 1991-92 over 1990-91 ; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) Yes, Sir. SAIL Plants have shown all around improvement in production in 1992-93.

(b) and (c) The saleable steel production in SAIL integrated steel plants has been as follows :

(Unit—million tonnes)

Year	Target	Actual	%age fulfil-ment	%age growth previous year
1990-91	7.776	7.364	95	4 2
1991-92	7.951	8.028	101	9.0
1992-93	8.216	8.335	101	3.8

The production of saleable steel has not come down and there has been growth over the years. However, the quantum of growth varies from year to year, depending on facilities available and quantity/quality of inputs.

Closure of Mini Steel Plants

199. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of mini steel plants in the country have been lying closed failing to sustain their viability mainly due to change in the Government policy relating to the steel sector ;

(b) whether Government are contemplating any steps to help the closed mini steel plants to resume operation; and

(c) if so, the details thereof, including contingency evolved, if any, for providing relief/rehabilitation to large number of people rendered unemployed by closure of the plants ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV) : (a) to (c) The performance of mini steel plants has been affected not by any change in Government policy but due to various factors such as demand recession, shortage of power and increase in input costs particularly in international scrap prices. The industry has represented for various reliefs and the proposals made by the industry are under the consideration of Government.

Sponge Iron Industry

200. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) the number of sponge iron units operational in Bihar with details thereof, and what is the capacity of each of such units per annum ;

(b) the number of units out of these units which are coal based and gas based and what was their total production during the last three years j year-wise details ;

(c) whether it is a fact that the availability of coal in abundance and plenty of raw material make Bihar an ideal state for the development of sponge iron industry ;
and

(d) if so what action Government pro-pefses to take to develop sponge iron indus try in Bihar ?

THE MINISTER-OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV) : (a) and (b) While there is no gas based sponge iron unit in Bihar, at present there is one coal based sponge iron unit of M/s. Bihar Sponge Iron Ltd. having a capacity of 1.5 lakh tonnes per annum in Bihar. The unit which is in production since July, 1989 is located in District Singhbhum, Bihar. Its total production during the last 3 years has been as under:

Year	Production (in lakh tonnes)
1990-91	1.15
1991-92	1 24
1992-93	1.19

(c) and (d) The Sponge Iron Industry is exempted from the requirement of industrial licensing except for certain restricted locations. Government approval for industrial license is therefore not required for establishment of sponge iron units except for the restricted locations (i.e. within 25 Kms. of any city having a population of more than 10 lakh as per the 1991 Census). Entrepreneurs are therefore free to take